

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 201

By Berke

A RESOLUTION to direct the Department of Human Services to review the impact of the Vocational Rehabilitation Order of Selection on the mentally ill.

WHEREAS, Vocational Rehabilitation is a federal/state program that provides services and support to enable individuals with disabilities to enter, maintain, or return to employment; and

WHEREAS, Vocational Rehabilitation is intended to help those individuals achieve and maintain meaningful work; and

WHEREAS, those individuals with a physical or mental impairment that makes it difficult to hold down a competitive job may be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services; and

WHEREAS, because current funding levels are not adequate to provide Vocational Rehabilitation services to all persons who are eligible, the state has elected to institute an Order of Selection to establish priority for services based on certain disabilities or conditions; and

WHEREAS, those Tennesseans with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI) are not included in the Order of Selection Priority Category 1 based on that condition alone, they are, therefore, not likely to actually receive the services and support through Vocational Rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will provide approximately \$12 million in federal stimulus money specifically for the expansion of vocational rehabilitation services; and

WHEREAS, these additional funds afford the State of Tennessee an unusual opportunity to target services and support to individuals with SPMI who heretofore have had difficulty qualifying for services through Vocational Rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, those SPMI individuals can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services and be successfully employed in the competitive job marketplace; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that the Department of Human Services is hereby directed to review the impact of the Vocational Rehabilitation Order of Selection on the mentally ill.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Human Services shall consider including those individuals with SPMI as determined by a Clinically Related Group (CRG) assessment as Vocational Rehabilitation Order of Selection Priority Category 1 on that basis alone.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be transmitted to the commissioner of the Department of Human Services.